

# Waste Reduction Task Force

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## *Waste Reduction Goal & Methodology Work Group #1*

**First Meeting – October 15, 2007**

### **Conference Call Summary**

Work Group Members Participating: Phillip Nappi, Bruce Wood, Bill Yearwood, Lucian Lawson, Charles Wood, Lisa Williams.

Facilitator: Nick Lytle, TDEC

This meeting was held in conference call format due to the wide range of home locations of the participants. After initial discussion of the current waste reduction law for Tennessee and resources available from the TDEC Waste Reduction Task Force website, the work group began discussing issues that were of immediate concern to the participants. Phillip Nappi volunteered to present a short recap of the work group's conversations to the Task Force.

There was concern that the result of the Task Force would be nothing more than a slight bending or changing of the initial 25% waste reduction and diversion goal that is currently in place; for example, simply changing it to 35% to bring it into line with EPA's goals. Nick Lytle discussed with the task force that their recommendations for future waste reduction goals could extend beyond this.

The consensus among the work group was that the goal should not just be a statement of what each solid waste planning region is expected to accomplish, but also contain specific methodologies on how waste will be reduced, and that any goal should result in a decrease in the amount of waste presently going into landfills.

One concern of the work group was the future roles of the counties and municipalities in waste reduction. The representatives from county governments had concern that whatever was enacted would fall exclusively on the back of the counties and the municipalities would be exempt from compliance and from providing of services. Once out for discussion, it was noted that the consideration of the roles of cities and municipalities belonged to another work group and that this topic should be brought up before the entire task force at the next meeting.

The next topic was potential landfill bans. Two items mentioned were yard waste bans and Construction and Demolition or C&D material bans from Class I landfills. It was noted that most landfill ban legislation fails as a result of argument that there is not universal alternative disposal options in place for the items, and until that is the case, a landfill ban will continue to fail. The Tennessee State University waste stream study should help answer some questions about how landfill bans are successfully accomplished and implemented.

One reason for the interest in landfill bans is that although public recycling programs are a great asset for the community, they do not capture a significant percentage of the waste destined for Class I landfills. Curbside programs in particular make recycling very convenient for the residents and increase participation levels; but cost communities money. The work group agreed that they have not heard of a curbside program that did not end up costing much more money than it brought in and the tonnages of material captured were insignificant when compared to the nearly seven million tons of waste disposed of in Class I landfills.

***First Work Group Recommendation to Task Force: Analyze whether a landfill ban of an item like C&D material or yard waste immediately translate into a reduction of Class I disposal tonnages. Analyze whether Tennessee is ready for additional landfill bans and if alternate waste management systems are available to handle these materials in all regions once they are banned.***

The next topic of consideration for the group is whether different solid waste planning regions should be held to the same or different standards. Of the 95 counties in Tennessee, 10 of those counties produce about 65% of the Class I disposal; which is expected as this percentage is in close proportion to those counties' populations. Some members of the group thought that it would be unfair and counterproductive to hold a small county like Clay County with 8,000 people and 5,000 tons of Class I disposal to the same standard as Shelby County with nearly a million people and 1.5 million tons of Class I disposal.

This topic was only in abstract terms as a final goal and methodology for waste reduction are not decided; however, the idea is to focus the majority of waste reduction efforts toward those regions producing the most waste.

The work group also suggested that landfill bans might initially be focused on these larger counties and solid waste planning regions as the infrastructure for handling the waste is more readily accessible there, and the volumes of waste will be large.

***Second Work Group Recommendation to Task Force: Different counties may need customized consideration in regards to their responsibility level in waste reduction measures.***

The final topic discussed was the role of education in promoting waste reduction. Waste reduction can be tackled at many stages along the way to the landfill, but some of these are outside the scope and jurisdiction of the Task Force. Increased funding and quality program development to teach the next generation that simply throwing things away is not a sustainable solution for waste management was agreed upon by most within the work group as a favorable step towards long term waste management.

***Third Work Group Recommendation to Task Force: Increase funding and programs toward education efforts aimed at youth.***

The meeting concluded with some housekeeping issues, such as the role of the Task Force and its limits of power. One member of the work group suggested a presentation on the effects landfills have on groundwater. Although this is outside the specific scope of the Waste Reduction Task Force, it was

thought that this was very in order to emphasize the seriousness and urgency of waste reduction from landfills.

It was also suggested that Phillip Nappi might consider an educational presentation at a later meeting of the Task Force to explain first hand the logistics of C&D recycling as an alternative to landfilling.

The work group requests the following information from TDEC:

- A list of landfills and their disposal tonnages.
- Information related to C&D recycling legislation and policies from other states.

Areas to further evaluate include:

- The results of the TSU waste stream study.
- C&D Recycling and Ordinances.
- Landfill Bans.
- Making sure any goal set has a method for fulfillment.
- The role of Class III/IV landfills, should they count towards any potential diversion effort.